

Planning Group Report September 2001

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This must have been one of the busiest years ever for RCAS planning work, due to the three mega-applications arising from the departure of UWE.

Other applications include:

118/120 Hampton Road

A development of flats and houses has finally been approved. The first scheme was refused by the planners, a decision upheld by the Inspector at a planning appeal, mainly on the grounds of over-development. A second scheme was further modified following representations by neighbours and RCAS and has now been permitted.

McDonalds, Clifton Down Shopping Centre

Following our objections, and those of other Societies, Big Mac backed away from their attempt to stay open until midnight and have now been given permission to extend their 10pm closing until 11pm. Still likely to cause problems as the pubs begin to empty, but better than threatened.

Cotham School

No new last minute planning applications this year! The performing arts building is now well advanced, with residents concerns remaining about noise from the amphitheatre. A very inadequate response was eventually received to serious objections about the amount of tree felling and lack of any undertaking to landscape the site, still being pursued by local residents. The overall situation with regard to school size and thus building plans is unclear due to Bristol's school policy review.

Avenue House, Cotham Park North

This is to be altered to meet current regulations requiring en-suite facilities. We objected to the design originally submitted which was refused permission. We were contacted by the applicant and discussed how the scheme could be made visually attractive. A new application has been approved.

THE UWE SITES

Redland Hill

The revised scheme described in the last Planning Group Report was given permission in June as forecast. The original scheme was almost 20% bigger and was almost universally criticised at the RCAS meeting in January. The reduction was achieved by shortening the main 125m long block and a height reduction from 6 to 5 storeys. We feel that the fully reasoned comments we made to the planners helped to secure a much more acceptable scheme. We did not object to the modern design approach, but felt that it could still have responded to Redland rather than looking 'one style - fits anywhere'. We accept that many members disliked the architecture and remain to be convinced.

Malvern House

The scheme for new flats and houses and alterations to existing buildings was submitted in January. We welcomed the well-detailed plans to return Malvern House, Redland Close, Elm House and Bellevue, all Listed buildings, to residential use. (Members may remember that the Society obliged UWE to reinstate the Malvern House dormer windows that they had illegally removed).

We objected to the impact of the new blocks of flats, particularly from Grove Road, the detail of a new road junction and some aspects which affect roads to the south of the site. Revised plans, including reduction by one storey on one block, have improved matters but we still have unanswered concerns. Changes continue to be made, involving more tree loss and a proposed 'one-way' system for Grove Road. The application is due to go to Committee on October 30th.

St John Reade Hostel *Covered in a separate document*